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To: Carr, Brian
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Environmental Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 13-121
December 19, 2013
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City Announces Innovative new Partnerships That Will Reduce the Amount of Organic Waste Sent to Landfills, Produce a Reliable Source of Clean Energy and Improve Air Quality

One of the Nation's First Biogas to Local Natural Gas Distribution Projects at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Will Produce Enough Renewable Natural Gas to Heat 5,200 New York City Homes

Pre-processed Organic Food Waste Will Be Used to Create Additional Biogas for Conversion to Renewable Natural Gas

Projects Contribute Towards Key PlaNYC Goals by Diverting Solid Waste from Landfills, Supporting Renewable Energy Development, and Reducing Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 90,000 Metric Tons

Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway, Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland, and Sanitation Commissioner John Doherty today announced two new partnerships that will reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfills, produce a reliable source of clean energy, and improve air quality. Waste Management has begun delivering pre-processed organic food waste to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant where it is added to wastewater sludge to increase the production of biogas. In addition, a first-of-its kind project with National Grid will convert the biogas by-product into pipeline quality renewable natural gas for residential and commercial use. Together, these projects have the potential to produce enough energy to heat nearly 5,200 New York City homes,

reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by more than 90,000 metric tons - the equivalent of removing nearly 19,000 cars from the road- and help City government reach its PlaNYC goal of reducing municipal greenhou se gas emissions by 30 percent by 2017. The announcement was made at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, with the Director of the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability Sergej Mahnovski, National Grid – NY President Ken Daly and Waste Management Area Vice President Tara Hemmer.

"This first-of-its kind renewable energy project will harness part of the 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater that New Yorkers generate every day," said Deputy Mayor Holloway. "The public-private partnership that made this possible will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of removing nearly 19,000 cars from City streets--a huge step towards making a greener, greater New York City. I want to thank Ken Daly and his team at national grid, and the State Public Service Commission for working with us to make this happen."

"Collecting and treating the more than one billion gallons of wastewater produced in New York City every day is essential to public health and the protection of the environment, but it also offers a significant opportunity to mine the resources in that waste stream for clean, reliable energy," said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Strickland. "At no cost to ratepayers, these projects will harness a byproduct of the wastewater treatment process to provide renewable natural gas to local residents while helping to clean the air we all breathe."

"These projects are terrific examples of how New York City is the test bed for bold ideas in clean energy and developing renewable biogas at Newtown Creek will serve as a blueprint for the type of transformative, sector-crossing projects needed to improve our air emissions and meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets," said Sergej Mahnovski, Director of the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability. "The projects will also act as a catalyst for developing new markets and technology for the resources recovered, both here in New York City and elsewhere."

"By deploying a robust organics program, DSNY is creating an opportunity for DEP to convert organic waste, that NYC used to spend millions of dollars to send to out of state landfills, into clean renewable energy right here in New York City," said Sanitation Commissioner John J. Doherty.

"For more than a century National Grid has provided the local Brooklyn community with clean burning economical natural gas. We are committed to delivering a low-carbon, sustainable energy future and we are proud to partner with DEP in this first-of-its kind project to demonstrate that renewable gas is a viable option to achieve this vision," said National Grid New York President Daly. "We are doing our part to help develop environmentally friendly energy technologies to minimize the effects of climate change on our communities. In partnership with New York City we have been able to make our communities stronger through the Clean Heat Initiative, the Brooklyn/Queens Interconnect project, Energy Tech High School and now Newtown Creek Renewable Gas Demonstration Project."

“Waste Management is focused every day on helping our customers extract more value from the waste stream,” said Tara Hemmer, Area Vice President – Greater Mid Atlantic, Waste Management. “To support this pilot program, we have established one of New York City’s first non-composting organics recycling facilities, which is designed to convert food waste into a clean, renewable energy source. This initiative marks a significant step forward toward achieving the City’s long- term sustainability goals of recycling organic waste and increasing the use of renewable energy.”

“Through this creative public/private partnership, the City of New York, National Grid, and Wastewater Management have demonstrated what a pathway to greater grid efficiency and reliability can look like,” said Richard Kauffman, Chairman of Energy and Finance for New York State. “As New York State transitions to a cleaner energy economy, innovative local solutions like this will be critical to ensuring that communities receive the clean power they need and deserve.”

“Recovering energy from solid waste is a smart and sustainable way to ensure electricity needs are met while benefiting the environment,” New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens said. “DEC oversaw the regulatory review of this project to ensure community impacts are minimal and that environmental justice concerns are addressed. The potential to create renewable energy and reduce harmful greenhouse gases is a win-win for New Yorkers.”

“Finding new ways to keep organics out of landfills and to generate clean biogas are 21st century waste management strategies that make perfect sense. We welcome the Bloomberg Administration’s latest such initiative and are rooting for this innovative approach to succeed in all of its worthy objectives,” said Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

“This is a really exciting development,” said Marcia Bystryn, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters. “The best part is that the city is addressing multiple environmental challenges – air quality, renewable energy and organic waste – at the same time. We applaud Deputy Mayor Holloway, Commissioner Strickland, Waste Management and National Grid for collaborating on this effort, and we hope it can serve as a model for more innovative environmental projects around the city.”

“Converting food waste to biogas allows us to use a local, urban energy source we’d otherwise throw away and helps reduce the need for fossil fuels,” said Andy Darrell, Environmental Defense Fund’s New York regional director. “This could be a model for locally produced energy in other cities.”

“Reducing the amount of organic waste sent to landfills, producing clean energy, and improving air quality is a win-win-win situation for the community,” said City Council Member Stephen Levin. “These are exciting new partnerships that will benefit Brooklyn in multiple ways.”

Biogas, which is mostly methane, is a by-product of the wastewater treatment process. Methane is also the main component of natural gas. DEP currently reuses approximately 40 percent of the biogas produced at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the new partnership with National Grid will ensure that 100 percent of it goes to beneficial reuses and does not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions from the plant. National Grid will finance the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the biogas purification system and initially DEP will provide the biogas free of charge. Once project costs have been recouped, profits will be split between DEP and National Grid's customers. Construction of the purification system will begin in 2014 and is expected to be completed in 2015.

Over the summer of 2013, Waste Management's Varick I transfer facility in Brooklyn began processing organic food waste collected from local schools into a liquefied feedstock using the company's proprietary Centralized Organic Recycling equipment (CORe)SM process. The feedstock is delivered in sealed tankers to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant where it is added to wastewater sludge to produce additional biogas. Waste Management is currently processing 2 tons per day of organic waste at the Varick I facility and plans to increase its volume to 5 to 10 tons per day during the initial pilot phase, with the potential to raise capacity to 250 tons per day over the next three years. If the pilot proves successful, there is the potential to process up to 500 tons of organic food waste per day at the Newtown Creek Plant.

Taken together, the initiatives have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 90,000 metric tons a year. Of this reduction, 54,500 tons will come from diverting the approximately 153,000 tons of organic waste from landfills, 32,400 tons will come from using the biogas, a renewable energy source, and offsetting emissions from traditional means of harvesting the natural gas, 2,290 tons from reducing the 2.1 million miles of truck trips, and 840 tons from diverting the excess biogas from the flare at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

In the past several years, the City has pursued a portfolio of initiatives to increase in-city renewable energy, improve air quality, and divert solid waste from landfills, as outlined in PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint. The City is more than halfway towards achieving its goal of a 30 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions citywide by 2030, and from City government operations by 2017.

Natural gas is cleaner than many other fuel sources, and renewable natural gas production can further improve New York City's air quality. These projects build upon other initiatives that have helped New York City's air quality reach the cleanest levels in more than 50 years. Since 2008, the levels of sulfur dioxide in the air have dropped by 69 percent and since 2007 the level of soot pollution has dropped by 23 percent. The cleaner air enjoyed by New Yorkers today is preventing 800 deaths and 2,000 emergency room visits and hospitalizations from lung and cardiovascular diseases annually, compared to 2008.

DEP operates 14 wastewater treatment plants throughout the city that clean and disinfect more than 1 billion gallons of wastewater to Federal Clean Water Act standards every day. At the plants, the wastewater undergoes five major physical and biological processes that closely duplicate how water is purified in nature. One of the byproducts of these processes is sludge. The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has eight digester eggs where the sludge is placed in an oxygen-free environment and is heated to at least 95 degrees Fahrenheit for between 15 to 20 days. This stimulates the growth of anaerobic bacteria, which consume the organic material in the sludge. The digestion process stabilizes the thickened sludge by converting much of the material into water, carbon dioxide and biogas.

Each year, the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant produces more than 500 million cubic feet of biogas. Of this, approximately 40 percent is reused in boilers that provide heat for plant buildings and the digester eggs. The excess biogas is flared into the atmosphere. Under the new partnership, National Grid will purify the approximately 60 percent of excess biogas to pipeline quality renewable natural gas on-site, and inject it into the local distribution network to heat residential and commercial properties.

The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is located in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, and with a capacity to treat 330 million gallons of wastewater each day it is the largest plant in the city. The plant was originally built in 1967 and is currently in the final stages of a multi-year, $5 billion upgrade. It accepts wastewater from more than 1 million residents across portions of southern and eastern Manhattan, western Queens, and northern Brooklyn.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from DEP facilities and beneficially reusing the biogas by-product of the wastewater treatment process are two of the sustainability goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. DEP already reuses the biogas byproduct, either in boilers or for powering equipment, at 13 of its 14 treatment plants and is designing facilities to use an even higher percentage, which will help to further reduce emissions and cut electricity costs.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 6,600 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned $14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel

No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwat er management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

Environmental Protection

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Department of Environmental Protection to Re-Activate Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel

1.2 Mile Long Flushing Tunnel Pumps Millions of Gallons of Highly Oxygenated Water from New York Harbor to Head of the Canal

$158 Million Project is Key Component of Plan to Improve the Health and Cleanliness of the Gowanus Canal

Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel will be re-activated this week for the first time since it was shut down for a full rehabilitation in 2010. The activation of the first submersible turbine pump will bring up to 100 million gallons of oxygen-rich water to the head of the Canal each day. The rehabilitation work also included draining the 1.2 mile long, 12 foot diameter tunnel and inspecting and repairing its brick-lined interior. After Hurricane Sandy, construction plans were altered to include resiliency measures such as raising the control room floor and its critical electrical equipment, flood-proofing the service building, and installing a dike wall and mechanical flood gate. Early next year it is expected that two additional turbine pumps will be activated, allowing for the injection of as much as 252 million gallons of fresher water into the Canal each day, or roughly 30 percent more than it could before the upgrade.

In addition, the tunnel will operate around the clock, including at low-tide, when the Canal water is at its most stagnant. The system of three pumps provides redundancy that will ensure that the tunnel remains operational during future maintenance and repairs and the fresher water provided through the flushing tunnel will increase the dissolved oxygen content of the water in the Canal which will dramatically improve its aesthetics and provide a more suitable habitat for plant and aquatic life.

“Mayor Bloomberg has led a transformation of the city’s waterways and the re-activation of the flushing tunnel will significantly improve water quality in the Gowanus Canal,” said DEP Commissioner Strickland. “We will also install hundreds of curbside gardens and high level storm sewers in the surrounding neighborhoods and the re-activation of an important pump station will all help to improve the health and aesthetics of the Canal.”

"Cleaning up the Gowanus Canal has long been a priority for our community and we are happy that the flushing tunnel will be reopened and can start to improve water quality in the canal,” said City Council Member Brad Lander. “I look forward to working with Department of Environmental Protection to take the further steps necessary to make the Gowanus safe for our community."

“The progress we’ve made over the last decade in cleaning up our waterways is one of the greatest accomplishments we as a city have made in ensuring the future health and well-being of all New Yorkers. The re-opening of this vital Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel puts one of the city’s most polluted waterways on a permanent path towards a more aesthetically pleasing and ecologically vibrant future. I want to thank Mayor Bloomberg for his leadership in our quest for a more environmentally sustainable and resilient New York and Commissioner Strickland for his excellent work on this project, and many others,” said Council Member James F. Gennaro, chair of the Council’s Committee on Environmental Protection.

“A clean and healthy Gowanus Canal will help ensure that the communities surrounding the Canal are safer, more sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing,” said City Council Member Stephen Levin. “I want to thank Commissioner Strickland and the Department of Environmental Protection for these improvements and their work to re-active the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel.”

“The reactivation of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel is yet another example that the clean-up of the canal is well underway,” said NYS Assembly Member Joan L. Millman. “I thank DEP for both repairing the flushing tunnel as well as increasing its capacity. Along with the EPA clean-up of the superfund site, we are another step closer to achieving a clean waterway.”

“I am very happy that the DEP will be returning the Flushing Tunnel to service,” said NYS Senator Velmanette Montgomery. “This, along with the EPA’s continuing cleanup of the Gowanus Canal, will literally breathe life into our beloved waterway!”

When the flushing tunnel was taken off-line in 2010, a temporary oxygen transfer system was installed alongside the Canal to help maintain a minimum level of oxygen in the stagnant water while the rehabilitation work took place. Removal of this temporary system could begin in January, once operational testing of the first flushing tunnel turbine pump is complete. The startup of the flushing tunnel for the first time in more than three years is also expected to temporarily stir up mud from the floor of the Canal, which will likely be visually noticeable. DEP has worked in conjunction with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and US Environmental Protection Agency to draw up plans to mitigate this expected increase in turbidity by slowly raising the volume of water pumped into the Canal and installing silt curtains to catch suspended sediment at the head of the Canal. Water sampling and visual monitoring will also take place. The rehabilitation is proceedin g pursuant to the federal Clean Water Act and a Consent Order entered into by DEP and DEC that aims to improve water quality throughout New York Harbor.

The Gowanus Canal is a nearly two mile long man made waterway that was built in the 1860's to facilitate commerce in western Brooklyn. The Canal runs from New York Harbor northeast through the Red Hook, Carroll Gardens, and Park Slope neighborhoods where it dead ends at Butler Street. Over time, commerce in the area grew but the Canal and its environs were left with a legacy of industrial contamination. In addition, with limited natural movement of water, the Canal became a stagnant and polluted waterway.

In 1911, the Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel was built to pump polluted water from the head of the Canal to Buttermilk Channel, which is part of the East River and lies between Governors Island and the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn. After decades of use and upgrades, the tunnel was taken out of service in the 1960's and the Canal remained stagnant for the next 30 years. DEP began a rehabilitation of the Flushing Tunnel in 1994 and this work included reversing the flow, so that more oxygenated water was now pumped from Buttermilk Channel to the head of the Canal and the lower quality water was flushed out. The tunnel was re-activated in 1999 and with clearer, more oxygenated water, within months schools of fish and blue crabs had returned to the Canal.

As part of the overall effort to improve the health and cleanliness of the Gowanus Canal, DEP will install separate storm sewer pipes, or high-level storm sewers, along 3rd Avenue in Park Slope. Once completed, this project will keep millions of gallons of stormwater out of the combined sewer system, help to mitigate chronic flooding during heavy rain storms, and reduce sewer overflows into the Canal.

In addition, as part of the $1.5 billion Green Infrastructure Plan, beginning next spring DEP will build hundreds of specially engineered curbside gardens, or bioswales, in sidewalks throughout the neighborhoods surrounding the Canal. Each bioswale can absorb nearly 2,500 gallons of stormwater when it rains which eases pressure on the combined sewer system and helps to reduce overflows

into the Canal. Bioswales also have hardy plants and trees to help absorb the stormwater, which also beautify the neighborhood, provide shade during the warmer months, and help clean the air.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned $14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwat er management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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Statement of Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Strickland on Senate Bill Exempting Hydrants from Lead and Copper Rules

"Yesterday, Congress passed an important bill that, if signed by the President, will prevent New Yorkers from footing the bill to replace nearly 1,400 perfectly good fire hydrants to fulfill a sudden and surprising interpretation of a proposed EPA rule related to lead and copper limits in drinking water. Under the current interpretation of EPA's rule, we would be required to retrofit all of the new hydrants

we have purchased but not yet installed - and do so on short notice. All of this to address a theoretical risk that could only materialize if someone was to drink from a hydrant for an extended period of time.

“At DEP we maintain a network of about 110,000 fire hydrants throughout the five boroughs that protect the public and help us manage a pressurized system of more than 7,000 miles of water mains. Each year we replace about 1,000 of those hydrants as they age, break, or are damaged. That requires we keep a healthy inventory of new hydrants. And the hydrants we have in stock are valued at more than $1 million.

“We ensure our water is of the highest quality with more than half a million annual tests taken both in the watershed, and at more than 1,000 sampling stations throughout the five boroughs. At every level of government the goal is the same - healthy drinking water for the people we serve. However, unlike many public services that receive significant support from the federal government, nearly every dollar we invest in our water and wastewater systems is paid for by New Yorkers through water and sewer bills.

“Over the last decade we have invested more than $10.5 billion in the infrastructure that delivers drinking water to New Yorkers. It is our responsibility to ensure that we continue to make every effort to work with our regulators to enact smart rules, based on sound science, to ensure that our customers continue to receive the highest quality drinking water at an affordable price.

“I thank Congress and specifically Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Paul Tonko for supporting this legislation. We have the best drinking water in the world and we need to ensure that it remains affordable for our customers. We are committed to continuing our partnership with our state and federal regulators to protect our water supply from realistic threats to public health. That pragmatic approach has created the world-class water system that has allowed our city to grow and prosper.”

Learn more at the NYC Environmental Protection website.

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